

**City of Belmont
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING MARCH 2, 2011
MINUTES**

The regular meeting of the Belmont Parks & Recreation Commission of March 2, 2011 was called to order at 7:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chair Andrews (CC), Vice Chair Cheechov, Youth Commissioner (YC) Bartee, Commissioner (C) King, Davis, Bortoli, C Sullivan (via phone from Truckee, CA). C Wright arrived at 7:05 p.m. and C Reimche arrived at 7:07 p.m.

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Landscape Architect Brent Cottong and Playground Designer Barbara Butler

STAFF PRESENT: Parks and Recreation Director (PRD) Gervais, and Secretary (S) Saggau

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes for the February 2, 2011 meeting to be reviewed at the next Commission meeting.

III. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION/COMMENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

C Bortoli reported on the grand opening of the Twin Pines Café at the Senior Center with the new lunch contractor Poplar Creek Grill. C Cheechov added the Senior Center is recruiting volunteers to serve the lunches.

C King stated she was surprised that there was a teleconference for this meeting and said she would not like to see a precedent set for future meetings.

PRD Gervais announced the Egg Adventure Hunt will be held on Saturday, April 23. On Sunday, May 1st the City will participate in Street's Alive which focuses on celebrating open spaces and increasing pedestrian and bicyclist activity.

C Wright arrived at 7:05 p.m.

PRD Gervais reported the Cipriani Dog Park design was approved by the City Council and that project will begin in the summer. The City Council also approved funds to prepare a design for the Belmont Sports Complex Synthetic Turf Project.

YC Reimche arrived at 7:07 p.m.

PRD Gervais noted the Commission Appreciation Dinner would be on Friday, March 4.

C Wright stated the Green Advisory Committee discussed doing a series of block parties as a kickoff for the Drive Less Challenge which will be from April 22-May 5.

C King noted the Park Boosters has donated \$125 towards the Egg Adventure Hunt. C Wright suggested that the Belmont/San Carlos Mother's Club be asked if they would like to donate to this event.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS

None

V. OLD BUSINESS

a. Davey Glen Park Conceptual Design Approval

PRD Gervais reviewed the conceptual design for the Davey Glen Park project. He noted the design was divided into four areas: A-Entrance, B-Level Play Area, C-Playground and D-Trails and Overlooks.

PRD Gervais explained the need to provide ADA (Americans Disability Act) access and the challenging grades at the site. A bulb-out to provide the ADA parking space is included in the plan. He noted the Committee discussed the stairwell in great detail and determined stairs are needed because people will want to go the quickest way down the hill and would create their own path if stairs are not available. Material for the ramps and staircase would consist of colored concrete. He noted a durable material is needed for maintenance reasons and that the cost of asphalt has increased and is close to the cost of concrete.

PRD Gervais presented slides of the park site showing the steepness of the entrance area and the proposed pathway. He reviewed the items in each area. Area A includes cutout benches, a pathway that park vehicles would use when servicing the park, trash/compost/recyclables receptacle area, small concrete boxes with grass or sedge planted in them that could be driven on, and post and cable fencing along hillside border. Area B consists of perimeter planting and wood fencing between the park and adjacent neighbors, walkways, two sites for a sedge and grass area, a replacement cover for the storm drain grate and benches.

A round platform entranceway, the play structure, fencing around the play area, and a platform sitting/amphitheatre area are included in Area C. PRD Gervais reviewed the features of the proposed play structure designed by Barbara Butler. These include a rope climbing net, slides,

swinging bridge, deck, play panel and ladder. The structure would be made of a wood texture, be ADA accessible, and built on a poured-in-place platform surface. Area D would provide a connection to nature with an ADA accessible pathway with platform overlooks, fencing and interpretive signage.

PRD Gervais and Landscape Architect Brent Cottong responded to questions from the Commission.

- Pathways in Area D would be level with platforms turned to take advantage of viewing points.
- Concrete would be preferred materials for the steps instead of wood because of maintenance reasons.
- Concrete would be colored a natural earth tone and be sandblasted to have more texture.
- Installing a low retaining wall and a couple benches would likely be less expensive than installing the platform amphitheatre seating area. C Wright noted the proposed seating area could extend the play area.

PRD Gervais stated the proposed design reflects all the functions the Committee thinks are important. The park is fully ADA accessible and provides a lot of different interesting and fun features.

PRD Gervais discussed the costs of the proposed project. He acknowledged that the estimate for this park exceeds the amount budgeted. The Committee determined Area D would be nice to have but it could be eliminated which would save \$175,000. They discussed ways to raise funds with donations. Possibilities include requesting in-kind services from Davey Tree Service and utilizing sheriff's crews for clearing and grubbing. Fundraising for the play structure and finding donors to contribute towards interpretive signage and site furnishings such as benches.

PRD Gervais noted C Bortoli brought to his attention an error in the estimate of Area C in the amount of \$61,000. A new revised estimate was distributed to the Commission. C Bortoli noted the correction also requires the revision of a couple other items which would make the total of Area C approximately \$324,000.

PRD Gervais suggested the Commission review the estimates and consider potential cost savings and fundraising opportunities for this project and bring these back to their next meeting. He noted the amount budgeted for this project is \$450,000. He added Davey Glen Park is twice the size of Semeria Park and that construction project costs \$291,000.

PRD Gervais and Landscape Architect Cottong responded to questions on the project costs.

Landscape Architect Cottong noted this site requires almost \$200,000 to provide access to the park. He explained the Ad-Hoc Committee has reduced almost 20% of the original estimate and has added more programs in the park, including the large playground.

Jim Callan – questioned the age range for the play structure. Playground Designer Barbara Butler explained the play structure design and how the features accommodate the various ages

from 2-12 years old. Mr. Callan asked if a specific oak tree would survive the project and PRD Gervais said he would have to take a look at it.

Paul O'Leary – spoke in the favor of the conceptual plan. He offered some suggestions to reduce costs including removing benches, reducing to one pathway for the circle, and installing a chain link fence instead of a wood fence. He added funds were set aside in 1999 and questioned if interest earned since then could be put towards this project.

PRD Gervais explained it is a challenge with project planning as there is not an escalation factor for construction costs that increase over time with inflation.

C Bortoli expressed concern with the overall cost. He noted if \$175,000 is deducted from \$887,000 the project will still cost over \$700,000 with a budget of \$450,000 that leaves a maximum shortfall of \$260,000. He noted whatever could be offset through donations or grants would reduce that amount but the projected donations would still leave a shortfall of about \$68,000. He suggested trying to quantify some of the donated aspects and see if there is interest in contributing towards this project. He added the play area is quite ambitious for a neighborhood park and may need to be scaled down.

C Davis spoke in favor of the park design but with the cost constraints he suggested doing the park in phases. Completion of Area A and B would provide a nice neighborhood park.

C Sullivan stated he understands the need to be prudent with resources in the City but that \$450,000 was determined 10 years ago without a concept of the park. He noted the park is twice the size of Semeria Park and has more challenges with the hillside slopes but would benefit more people in the neighborhood.

C Cheechov said that the cost for Areas A & B would be \$381,367 and questioned if the play structure could be placed in Area B. She also questioned why there are not swings and it was explained that was because of space consideration.

C King spoke in favor of the design but noted it is not affordable. She suggested doing all the initial grading for Areas A, B, C and D, completing Areas A and B, and when more funds are available do C and D. She added initial grading should be completed in C and D so when it is possible to complete C and D it would not be necessary to bring equipment across Areas A & B.

C Wright said she is in support of this project and she and the others on the Ad-Hoc Committee looked at what could be removed off to reduce costs. They decided the choices made for this project are the most efficient that could be done. She challenged the Commission to reach out to the community and let them know the vision for this park and see if there is support for it. She noted she spoke to the Mother's Club and they will discuss this project at their Board Meeting. C Wright preferred checking if the City Council would have other ideas or funding sources before cutting back on this park design.

C Cheechov agreed with C King's idea of grading all the areas at one time.

C Bortoli noted completing all of Areas A and B and preparing the grading for Areas C & D with all the additional bring the costs to \$576,000+. He spoke in favor of C Wright's idea of asking the City Council if they are interested in spending more than \$450,000 for the park.

C Sullivan said he agreed with completing the grading in all areas if only Areas A and B can be completed but he agreed more with C Wright that the Commission should try to get community support for this project.

C Andrews spoke in favor of completing Areas A, B and C and not completing Area D and let that area be a trail. He supported the Commission pursuing additional funding or donations to complete A, B and C.

YC Bartee agreed that the Commission should ask for the City Council for additional funding as the \$450,000 budgeted amount is outdated.

C Bortoli noted that grading the entire park would make it possible for potential donors to view the site for the play structure.

Resident Jim Callan suggested putting the play structure in Area B and making Area C the grass area to reduce costs. C Wright explained the reason the play structure was placed in Area C was to provide an area for those that did not want an active park.

Following Commission discussion there was consensus to:

- Bring plan to the Planning Commission
- Look into possible funding sources
- Review again prior to presenting conceptual plan to the City Council.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

None

VII. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

A. Questions and Comments

PRD Gervais stated that modest playground improvements to the Barrett Playground will be on the City Council agenda to replace non-compliant swings and the addition of a small play structure for the 5-12 year old range. The Rotary Club will donate \$2,500 to cover the cost of the swings.

PRD Gervais reported the Father/Daughter Dance was successful and sold out.

PRD Gervais said the new lunch program at the Senior Center started and encouraged the Commission to invite friends.

Responding to C Bortoli's question staff will send out an email announcing Opening Days for Softball and Little League.

C Davis commented he saw a photo of PRD Gervais with youths from the Footsteps program participating in a creek cleanup. He noted he was not familiar with Footsteps and learned they are part of the recreation program. He requested that the Director of the program be introduced to the Commission.

In response to C King's question C Sullivan explained Patty Ciesla is still involved in the trail building projects but he has agreed take over the promotion and to be in charge of half of the workdays. They are trying to bring in more community volunteers to assist them.

B. Future Agenda Items

Paper Trails – May
Commission Assignments – April
Tree Ordinance
Heal (Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyles) Campaign
Barrett Dog Issue
Parks Foundation

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Jonathan Gervais
Parks & Recreation Director